

**QUESTIONS FOR THE APPOINTEE TO THE WESTERN MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY BOARD OF CONTROL**

1. What goals would you like to accomplish during your time on the board?
2. Over the last 15 or 20 years it seems that all state universities have been expanding programs to try to offer everything to everyone. Do you think this is a good idea?
3. Please describe the conditions that would have to exist before you would vote to increase tuition?
4. Governor Granholm recently proposed giving additional funds from the federal economic stimulus package to universities and community colleges that hold the line on tuition. Do you support this proposal?
5. If Western Michigan University is facing a budget deficit, what areas would you look to first to make cuts? Please list several areas where the University has already made cuts or become more efficient.
6. Capital outlay projects for universities require a 25% match before getting funds from the state for building projects. In these tough economic times, do you think a university should be spending money on building projects rather than using that money to hold down tuition rates?
7. What type of outcomes should the university measure to determine if it is being successful?
8. What is your position on the importance of state universities as authorizers of charter public schools?
9. In which areas of technological research does your university specialize? How effective is your school at commercializing this research to help grow the state's economy?
10. Do you think that K-12 institutions are doing a good job of preparing students for college? Why?

To: Honorable Michael D. Bishop, Senate Majority Leader
Att: William Sullivan, Special Counsel
From: James Hettinger, Proposed Appointee for Western Michigan University Board of Trustees
Re: Attached Questionnaire
Date:

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the people of Michigan as a trustee on the Western Michigan University Board of Trustees. I have completed answers to your questions to the best of my knowledge. Please feel free to contact me for any additional questions or clarifications.

1. What goals would you like to accomplish during your time on the board?

Most important to me is keeping the costs of higher education within the range of affordability for most Michigan families. There is little question as to the relationship of higher education to higher income levels. If we are to rebuild the Michigan economy, we will need to do it with a much better educated workforce. We will need to be creative in the immediate future in assuring that financial barriers will not prevent Michigan students from pursuing higher education.

Secondly, I would like to help WMU develop and implement an efficient and effective technology transfer process that not only contributes to the diversification and improvement of the Michigan economy, but also has the potential to develop into a revenue producer for the university.

A third goal is to encourage WMU to be a leader in learner-centric education, thus, being able to utilize technology to bring education to potential students at their convenience.

2. Over the last 15 or 20 years, it seems that all state universities have been expanding programs to try to offer everything to everyone. Do you think this is a good idea?

Coordinating public universities with their own respective charters may be akin to the herding of cats. Nonetheless, I think Michigan universities need to pursue their strategic competencies; develop a penchant for uniqueness; and build curricula around their unique strategic competencies. These competencies need to be supported in the host communities. In short, I do not believe it is a good idea for Michigan universities to try to be everything to everyone.

3. Please describe the conditions that would have to exist before you would vote to increase tuition.

Tuition costs are already accelerating, making it difficult enough for a Michigan student to pursue higher education. I would definitely want to be satisfied that many other cost cutting and revenue raising approaches are fully evaluated before we vote to pass the costs on to an already beleaguered Michigan student seeking higher education. Michigan universities may need to undertake a restructuring in order to align with the diminished asset base in Michigan.

4. Governor Granholm recently proposed giving additional funds from the stimulus package to universities and community colleges that hold the line on tuition. Do you support this proposal?

I would support this proposal as it would reward those institutions of higher learning that are taking our crisis seriously.

5. If Western Michigan University is facing a budget deficit, what areas would you look to first make cuts? Please list several areas where the University has already made cuts or has become more efficient.

Structurally, I would want a list of chronically under enrolled programs to see if there are possibilities to save revenue by shifting resources from failing programs to growing programs. In addition to a review of administration and administrative practices for cutting, I would also urge increases in university productivity to offset costs. As in the aforementioned, the conversion of university knowledge capital to incoming revenue streams has enormous potential for financing higher education.

WMU has made progress in energy distribution and use on its main campus. The College of Aviation has made huge strides by increasing its simulation technology in order to compensate for the high costs of aviation fuel and the high costs of bad weather.

6. Capital outlay projects for universities require a 25% match before getting funds from the state for building projects. In these tough economic times, do you think a university should be spending money on building projects rather than using that money to hold down tuition?

Hopefully we could do both. In the case of new building projects, I would insist on clear identification of the opportunity, the business case, the sustainability, and the relevance. However, I have made it clear that I think primary efforts should be directed at keeping higher education affordable. I would be a near impossible sell on new building projects if tuition increases were part of the picture.

7. What types of outcomes should the university measure to determine if it is being successful?

I come from the school of management that says if you do it, you can measure it. I would want to measure graduation rates, average-time-to-complete rates, successful placement of graduates, cost of education per capita, and size of alumni associations.

I would want to bench-mark the university against similar sized universities in terms of the above cited categories.

8. What is your position on the importance of state universities as authorizers of charter public schools?

I do not rule out charter public schools, particularly, if the charter school is to be a themed charter public school. I could see Western Michigan University authorizing a charter public school that embraced an aviation and aerospace theme to feed students to the WMU College of Aviation. I think the importance of authorizing a charter public school is enhanced if it is related to a university strategic competency.

9. In what areas of technological research does your university specialize? How effective is your school at commercializing this research to help grow the Michigan economy?

WMU can specialize in paper technology research, engineering research, some life sciences, and aviation research. I do not believe any Michigan university, beyond the U of M and Michigan Tech, has done a particularly good job at commercializing research. This would be an area of interest and an area of focus for me.

10. Do you think K-12 institutions are doing a good job of preparing students for college? Why?

I believe K-12 institutions are doing an adequate job of preparing students, but K-12 needs to focus on inculcating better study habits.

There is always room for improvements, however. K-12 could, for example, work better with community colleges to assist college bound students with transferable class credits that could be earned while still in high school. This would help take some of the costs out of the pursuit of higher education.